

Civic Engagement

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Utah State Office of Education
Life Skills, Academic Service Learning



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The Monk and the Beetle

The first tenet of Zen Buddhism teaches a reverence for all life forms. A story is told of an aged Buddhist monk who was walking one day with a young disciple. The monk walked slowly along a dirt path and occasionally paused, stooped down, and swept aside the surface dirt on the path. The disciple observed this and queried his master.

"Why do you brush the path ahead of you?" he asked.

"My son," the monk said, "I brush to remove the insects who might otherwise be crushed by my feet as I walk."

The young man thought for a while.

"But master," the young man replied, "there are so many bugs. You can't possibly avoid them all. What you do really makes no difference."

The monk bent over and pointed to a beetle, picked it up and set it out of the way, next to some ants that he had previously brushed aside.

"What I do makes a difference to this one" he said.

The young man understood and continued on his way with the monk in silence.

This variation of the old starfish tale provides some interesting thoughts to

consider. Sometimes we push issues and programs so hard that we unknowingly "crush" others who we didn't observe that were in our way. A basic ideal of civic education is respect for others. How important it is for us to be aware of the desires, ambitions, and freedoms of others as we plan programs to educate our youth.

As a second point, our efforts to reach even one (and especially one) are always worthwhile. Sometimes we spend a great deal of time trying to affect a large population of students with a lesson plan, activity, program, or policy. What is more often needed is a more committed and concentrated effort to reach just one who is in great need. Any genealogist can readily tell you how many generations can be affected by one life. It doesn't take but a few generations to produce a multitude.

The State Office of Education often takes a macro approach in the programs that are implemented. How important it is that respect and consideration for individuals along our "path" be recognized and cared for. Individual administrators impact individual teachers who impact individual students.

U. S. Government & Citizenship Summer Training

The second annual workshop for teachers of United States Government and citizenship will be held at the Sevier Education

Center in Richfield, Utah from June 12-15, 2006. This workshop features guest presenters, hands-on technology, and opportunities

for collaboration for instructors of the 12th grade course. The workshop can accommodate up to 30 participants, who will be eligible for USOE/SUU recertification credit. Costs for accommodations, meals, lodging, and mileage will be covered and a \$200 stipend will also be given. Those who attend will be asked to share teaching strategies and participate in course development. Registration is now open on the page at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/civics/Registration06.pdf>

The deadline for signing up is May 1, 2006, and is first come, first served. Print out the form and send it in today!

"A great harm is being done to a generation of young adults by withholding the full access of their constitutional rights while in high school, then expecting them to be full participants in a democratic society when they are older."

Gene Policinski
Director, First Amendment Center
Nashville

Hinckley Institute of Politics

The 2006 Huntsman Seminar will take place June 12-16, 2006 at the Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah.

The Huntsman Seminar on Constitutional Government for Teachers is a five-day, summer seminar for secondary civics teacher sponsored by the Jon and Karen Huntsman Foundation. The primary focus of the seminar is to improve the quality of civic education in Utah schools. Participants gain valuable knowledge and insight into current events in American Politics by learning from and interacting with political experts, judges, university faculty, and elected officials. The Huntsman Seminar is a unique opportunity for teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of local, state, and national political issues.

Principal topics covered during the seminar include:

- The American Republic & the U.S. Constitution
- Election 2006: Candidates and Issues

- The Two-Party System in the U.S.
- Quality of Leadership and Representation
- The Role of Campaign Finance Reform and the Impact of the Media
- Politics in the Classroom: The Fine Art of Educating Young Citizens
- Interest group politics
- The Right to Vote

Each year, 25 to 30 secondary civics teachers from Utah are selected as participants and receive a fellowship. A Huntsman Seminar Fellowship provides graduate credit (3 hrs of Poli Sci 6990) and all costs for tuition, books, and supplies. Participants are asked to contribute an enrollment fee of \$100.

For More Info - Contact Jayne Nelson at the Hinckley Institute of Politics, (801) 581-8501, jnelson@hinckley.utah.edu



National & Global Youth Service Day

State Farm Companies Foundation and Youth Service America are sponsoring National & Global Youth Service Day 2006, April 21-23, 2006. This event, "the largest service event in the world, mobilizes youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service, recruits the next generation of volunteers, and educates the public about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders. National & Global Youth Service Day is the U.S. celebration of Global Youth Service Day, which takes place concurrently in more than 100 countries."

Several statewide organizations will promote service learning on one of these 3 days with a common goal – to advance the level of emergency preparedness in communities. Volunteer organizations in Utah have come together to create a Unified Service Plan, which lists disaster and emergency preparedness as a fundamental tenet. Schools are encouraged to participate with academic service learning projects that focus on this issue.



Some sample academic service learning projects include:

- (1) Instruction in preparation of 72 hour kits
- (2) Creating and disseminating lists of community emergency response resources
- (3) Long range financial planning training
- (4) Developing response plans with care facilities
- (5) Instruction in basic food storage techniques

Ethics in Action

The annual Youth Leadership Summit sponsored by the Community of Caring will be held at the University of Utah from July 11-13, 2006. This year's workshop, "Ethics in Action" is for teams of 4 students, grades 9-12, and an accompanying adult. These teams will learn how to apply values in every day school life and practice civic engagement and academic service learning.

Special guest presenters at this year's workshops include Lee Caldwell, of "Horse Whisperer" fame, and Dr. Ira Chasnoff, professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago.

The Utah State Office of education, as a co-sponsor, has allocated money for scholarships for 4 teams of students and teachers to attend this conference. These will cover the costs of registration, materials, meals and lodging for these teams.

Interested teachers with teams of students are encouraged to apply by sending an email message with school and participant names to elaine.jones@schools.utah.gov. A brief explanation of how teams anticipate using this training should also be included.

Attendees at this conference will stay in the Heritage Residence Halls, site of the 2002 Olympic Village, during the Summit. Further information is available on the website at [http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/All%20Conference%20Flyers%202006%202-8-06%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/All%20Conference%20Flyers%202006%202-8-06%20(2).pdf)



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Regional Trainings

Regional training sessions in Civics, Character Education and Academic Service Learning were held at 4 locations around the state. Participants were treated to excellent presentations featuring such notables as Barry Gomberg, professor and Affirmative Action representative at Weber State University, Judge Samuel McVey of Utah County, and Marilyn Hetzel from Utah State University Extension Services. Instruction focused on the issue of equality.

Representatives of the state's Volunteer Centers also were in attendance and provided much valuable information regarding student and community involvement in Service Learning. School personnel from 35 districts and schools received some excellent training in these workshops. Thanks to all who attended and participated! Look for announcements of upcoming trainings in the near future.

Great Resources

Character Education, Prevention, and Positive Youth Development - http://www.character.org/atf/cf/{77B36AC3-5057-4795-8A8F-9B2FCB86F3EB}/Battistich_Paper.pdf

Online Conference in Character Education
"Character Education in a World of Budget Cuts and Standardized Testing" - <http://www.devstu.org/ce2006/>

Animating Democracy: Fostering Civic Engagement through Arts & Culture - <http://www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy/>

GovSpot - <http://www.govspot.com/>

Learning in Deed: Making a Difference Through Service Learning - <http://learningindeed.org/index.html>

E-mail lists:

Civics: civics@uen.org
Subscribe at
<http://lists.uen.org/mailman/listinfo/civics/>

Character Education:
chared@uen.org
Subscribe at
<http://lists.uen.org/mailman/listinfo/chared/>

Service Learning: sl@uen.org
Subscribe at
<http://lists.uen.org/mailman/listinfo/sl/>

USOE Websites:

Character Ed – http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/default.htm

Civics – <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/civics/index.htm>

Service Learning – <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/servicelearning/index.htm>